

## **Increasing the Competence of Village Youth Communities through the Introduction of Cultural Experience and Knowledge in Local Wisdom**

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### **Abstract**

Increasing the competence of village youth communities through the introduction of cultural experience and knowledge in local wisdom is a response to the problem of youth who are currently more interested in foreign cultures than their own, which is one of the formation of national character and identity. In addition, youth apathy in local culture, which is strengthened by the onslaught of global Islamic movements or transnational Islam develops among millennials so that religious values that exist in various traditions become misunderstood. This community assistance is located in Ketanen Village, Panceng District, Gresik Regency with the participatory action research method. The mentoring steps include preparation, process, analysis to evaluation. The result of the service is the increasing competence of the youth community, which can be seen by the awareness of the youth community to preserve the cultural heritage that has existed through various positive activities. Through this service, a village history team was formed as a center of information on various local wisdom.

**Keywords:** youth community; competency improvement; local wisdom

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### **Introduction**

Indonesia is known for having local wisdom in many forms. Local wisdom is formed because of the diversity of traditions that are rooted in each region. Over time, the cultural pattern in Indonesia, which was once more influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism, has experienced acculturation since the arrival and development of Islam, especially in the northern coastal area of Gresik. The acculturation process occurs because the culture of the ancestors has been so strong and hereditary that of course the new culture that comes cannot replace it. Therefore, acculturation is the right step so that the new culture can be accepted and blended without losing the personality of the culture itself. This is a manifestation of the policy of spreading Islam with the establishment of *Bayangkare Islah* by Demak Bintoro in 1476 which allowed Islamic values to be spread only through culture (Azis, 2013).

One example of local wisdom through the process of cultural acculturation is the tradition of village salvation in certain areas. Of course, the term salvation in each region is

different from one another. A popular term is earth alms, Kiftiyah et al., (2020) at least describe the correlation between gratitude and earth alms with indigenous psychology reviews, which are scientific studies of human behavior or thoughts native to the region or local cultural culture that are not transported from other regions. In another study, Rochmawati et al., (2021) explained the earth alms tradition and its relation to gratitude and reciprocity in a village community.

Similar to earth alms, another local wisdom is the tradition of ruwatan (ceremonies held so that someone can be freed or released from danger) which is carried out as a form of gratitude for God's gift. Many studies try to inform the ruwatan culture, some of which are Nisa (2020), Kuriandini & Artono (2021), Hardiansyah et al., (2022) and Widiatmaka (2022) which all explain the form of local wisdom, rituals, and community receptions related to the implementation of ruwatan in the area studied. Another tradition of local wisdom through cultural acculturation is the Nyumpet tradition, as researched by Widiana (2017), this tradition is in the form of a prayer ritual to fence the venue a week before the wedding or circumcision is held. Almost the same tradition as Bongkah Bumi as Maryamah & Ratnawati (2018) researched, that this tradition is carried out one week before the harvest.

Unfortunately, along with the times, technology or the digital era also develops. The impact of these developments is the ease of accessing information, especially from the outside world. Of course, the dynamics of the times have a positive and negative impact also for millennials, who are the successors of future lives. Widiatmaka (2022) his research stated that today's youth are more interested in foreign cultures than their own. Even though the existence of local wisdom is one of the formations of national character and identity. This is as Pesurnay (2018), and Sardi et al., (2019) argue that local wisdom is a communicative social system to produce rules in a culture. Rohayu & Absori (2019) even assert that the influence of local wisdom is extraordinary. In his second study on illegal logging cases in Sumbawa, only local wisdom was able to minimize the problem. Moreover, Sugartana & Yasa (2021) said that local wisdom can also be used to develop the village economy.

In addition to apathy in local culture, another problem that must be faced by our nation is the global Islamic movement or transnational Islam that is growing among millennials. Various discourses to return to Islam *kaffah* make the religion seem rigid and immoderate. The religious values present in various traditions have become misunderstood.

Even though religion, especially Islam came and developed in Indonesia because it heeded the acculturation of two cultures, namely the culture of the ancestors (Javanese) who were influenced by Hindu-Buddhism and Islam which could blend without losing the personality of the existing local culture.

These various problems are at least the reason for the importance of maintaining the existence of local wisdom in an area, especially in the realm of improving the competence of the village youth community to be more concerned and love their local culture. Of course, research has been found that discusses strategies for preserving a culture or local wisdom such as research by Nugraheni (2017), Nahak (2019), and Hamiru et al., (2022) which describe the effectiveness of youth participation in cultural activities. Of course, there is also community empowerment to preserve local wisdom. Sulistyani & Putri (2023) for example, assist in making written batik based on local wisdom in Batu City, Malang. Meanwhile, Rahayu et al., (2022) socialize local culture through digitalization to increase nationalism. Various existing assistance or service can certainly illustrate the similarity of themes between existing and this service, which is focused on problems of local wisdom. It's just that there are significant differences related to this community assistance. In addition to aiming to preserve local wisdom, this assistance also aims to improve the competence of the village youth community. Where after completing the assistance in the introduction of cultural experience and cultural knowledge, the village youth community can become a pioneer of youth in their area, so that awareness of the preservation of local culture does not reach only one community but other communities in the surrounding area and generations afterward.

## **Method**

This community service activity uses the Participatory Action Research method approach. According to Afandi et al., (2016) the participatory action research approach was carried out to obtain the initial data needed in this community service program by actively involving all parties, both from the village youth community in Ketanen Village, village government and other general public involvement.

At the implementation stage, the service program is carried out with a Community Organizer approach. Wicaksono & Darusman (2001) said that community organizing is a process of building strength by involving as many constituents as possible through the process

of identifying existing threats together, identifying desired solutions to existing threats; identifying existing people and structures, bureaucracy, and tools so that the selected resolution process becomes possible, set goals to be achieved; and Build an institution that is democratically overseen by all constituents to develop the capacity to deal with threats and accommodate all the desires and strengths of existing constituents.

Community organizing here is understood as a process of building strength that involves various parties in exploring problems that occur in the community with existing potentials and intervening so that changes occur for the better. There are three things related in the sense of community organizing, namely (1) there are problems and potential for problem-solving, (2) intervention towards change, and (3) parties involved in community intervention.

## **Result and Discussion**

Ketanen Village is located on the north coast of Panceng District, Gresik Regency. This village has an area of 4,160,913 H with a current population of 2,627 people. The village has hilly limestone topography and flat and extensive red soil making it suitable for agriculture. The fertile land is overgrown with biodiversity including; rice, sticky rice, corn, soybeans, tubers to tobacco plants. And of course, the majority of people work as farmers.

Today Ketanen Village is included in the category of developing villages with all kinds of potential possessed. Starting from natural tourism, local wisdom, and cultural site heritage to the development of the quality of human resources.

Various kinds of natural heritage sites in Ketanen Village, including Bukit Pundut, Sendang Ketanen, Sendang Pundhut, Sendang Lemahireng, and Sumur Sono. Its existence until now has become a natural resource asset that continues to be cared for and maintained by the surrounding community through annual ritual activities in the form of earth alms and sitting in Ketanen Village.

In addition to various sites, several tombs are thought to be figures who pioneered the existence of Ketanen Village, including:

1. The tomb of Sayyid Abdurrahman with his nickname mbah Joyo Adi (mbah Bakal). Which is in Pundut Hamlet. He is a pandito figure who unites Ketanen Village.

2. The tomb of Mbah Pandhit or Mbah Tugur resides on the hill kapandhitan or pundhut. The only tomb located on a hill or mountain pundhut. It is said that he was a knight on horseback who was the bodyguard of Sunan Kali Jaga. Duty to protect the community living in the Bukit Pundut area and its surroundings.
3. The tomb of Mbah Sujud who dwells in Pundhut. Mbah prostrate does not have a home, and his activities are prostrating beside the belang pundhut to worship Allah, make dhikr, and pray for his descendants and grandchildren. on the edge of the sendang there is a stone measuring 2X4 meters which was once a place for Mbah prostration.
4. The tomb of Mbah Bondo is located in the Bendo rice field area of Ketanen Village. Mbah Bendo which means mbah who has a lot of *bondo* (treasure). He was a very wealthy farmer and was famous for his extraordinary generosity. He had cows, buffaloes, goats, and many other possessions. This farmer donated his wealth to fight in the community and build the village. Although rich and generous, this farmer did not want to be called a rich man and show his services in the community, instead, he was very humble and sincere to the point that he did not want to be invited to gather in the community and preferred to live alone in the middle of the forest. It is estimated that Mbah Bondo is not from Ketanen, he is one of the descendants of Raden from Mataram.

Various local wisdom, in the form of sites and cultural traditions in Ketanen Village, of course, is very unfortunate if it is then neglected because the young people are more enthusiastic about foreign cultures. Therefore, the agenda of activities in assisting the improvement of the competence of the village youth community is carried out with the introduction of cultural experience and cultural knowledge of the local wisdom of the village. Cultural experience is a way of preserving local culture by participating directly in the activity. Cultural knowledge is a form of preservation of local culture by establishing an information center related to the culture of the region, both concrete and abstract. Cultural knowledge is carried out as an effort so that local wisdom is maintained and maintained so that it can be developed as a potential village.

In the introduction of cultural experience, the service team provided several strategies that can be done by the pioneer youth community to introduce and provide space for young people in general, to be involved in the process of village cultural traditions. Among them are the cultural traditions of the region among others: earth alms, sitting sendang, and shadow

puppet performances. As for the introduction of this cultural knowledge, the service team provided several suggestions and ideas that could be done by the youth community, namely by holding a cultural workshop to discuss the acculturation of ancestral culture with Islam that came after. This event is scheduled in conjunction with other cultural activities such as earth alms. In addition, the idea of the existence of the Village History Bubak Team is so that it can become an integrated information center related to various local wisdom in Ketanen Panceng Gresik Village.

Based on the results of the presentation, broadly speaking, this assistance can be described as follows:

1. In the initial stage, the initiation of the program was carried out with surveys and discussions at the Ketanen Village Hall, Panceng District, Gresik Regency, on February 22, 2023. Participants who attended consisted of representatives of young mosque activist, youth organization, and representatives of village administrators. In this focus group discussion, all participants were involved in preparing a draft schedule of activities. The result of this activity is in the form of a timeline for the design of the activity program during mentoring.
2. After knowing the various problems and human resources that are factors in the success of this program. So, the next step is to design a solution, which in this case is very appropriate if then using the cultural experience and cultural knowledge approach to local wisdom. This approach minimizes gaps or misunderstandings. Calls and invitations to participate in activities certainly have a better impact, than giving lectures or advice that cultivating or preserving local culture is the responsibility of all villagers, from small to old. This activity is carried out more casually on several occasions, from 23 February to 10 March 2023.
3. The intervention stage is carried out in the form of capacity building in the form of a workshop on introducing cultural experience and cultural knowledge to the local wisdom of the village, which is formulated by providing strategies and how they work. This activity will be held on 15 March 2023. There were at least twenty participants involved in this workshop. As a result of this activity, participants were enlightened on the right strategies and methods to introduce local culture to millennials to Generation Z. The success of this program can be seen by the formation of a village history team.

Evaluation is the final stage to find out how successful the program is implemented. The evaluation also provides an overview of future follow-up so that cooperation can still be carried out. In addition, evaluation can also be a place for input so that increasing the competence of the village youth community can be a pioneer for other communities. The development that can be seen after the evaluation is the various activities that have been carried out by the village youth community or village history team, called the Ketanen Village Bubak Team. Meanwhile, the assisted community is working on a project to make a village history book, which is currently still in the stage of searching and collecting data, from literature, and manuscripts in the Surowiti mountain library, for elders who still record family trees. Making this village history book is used as a first step so that all future generations know the origin of local wisdom in the village. In addition, the youth community team of this village also involves other village communities because it still has something to do with the ancestral tree between one village and another. This can be seen when detecting manuscripts and village sites, both those that are still in the Ketanen Village area or sites that enter the border of Bejan Village or Siwalan Village.

## Conclusion

Increasing the competence of the village youth community through the introduction of cultural experience and cultural knowledge of local wisdom of the village is a response to the problem of youth who are currently more interested in foreign cultures than their cultures. Even though the existence of local wisdom is one of the formation of national character and identity. In addition, youth apathy in local culture, which is strengthened by the onslaught of global Islamic movements or transnational Islam develops among millennials so that religious values that exist in various traditions become misunderstood. The results of this assistance can be seen by increasing the competence of the youth community, which can be seen by the awareness in the community to preserve cultural heritage that has existed in various positive activities.

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